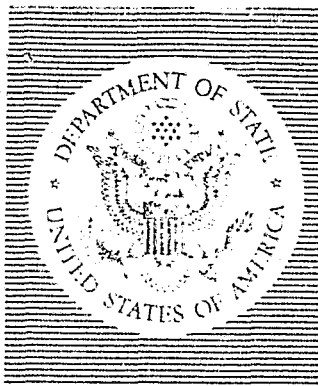




CONFIDENTIAL

INRB-112

INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

May 1, 1970

REVIEWED BY *Amblay* DATE *10/9/80*

To : The Secretary
Through: S/S
From : INR - Ray S. Cline

Subject: USSR: Some Thoughts on How Moscow May React to US Actions in Cambodia

REASON: XDS [] EXT. DATE

TO: [] REASON(S)

ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS []

DISSEMINATION: []

RELEASE DENIED []

PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

Pending an authoritative Soviet statement on US policy in Cambodia or other evidence of Soviet reaction, we offer some tentative thoughts on what considerations Moscow is likely to take into account in assessing the American action and determining an appropriate Soviet response.

Is Propaganda Condemnation Enough? Confronted by an officially announced US policy of extending the Vietnam conflict into Cambodia, the Soviets cannot but condemn this action in the harshest possible language on the propaganda level. The questions remain, however, of how they are likely to assess the situation privately, and whether their response will go beyond propaganda condemnation.

Moscow may hope that, in the long run, the US action will have unfavorable consequences for the US; that it might mire down US troops in a new theater, disrupt rather than facilitate the program of Vietnamization, and increase domestic opposition within the US. In the short run, however, Moscow may fear that Hanoi would suffer a sharp reversal through the destruction of supplies and installations in Cambodia and through the interdiction of the routes which Hanoi has been using to support its operations in South Vietnam. The Soviet leaders would be aware that

This report was produced by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Aside from normal substantive exchange with other agencies at the working level, it has not been coordinated elsewhere.

CONFIDENTIAL

INRB-112

POL 27 CAMB XR POL 27 VIET S. E. XR POL 27 VIET S. E. NS-255R

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

propaganda condemnation of the US action would not be enough to alter these immediate effects, and Moscow could come under great pressure to respond by actions rather than words. The degree of response would obviously have to be gauged in the light of pressure from Hanoi and, perhaps, taunts from Peking.

USSR Unlikely to Support Conference Now. For the time being, the USSR is likely to shelve any thought of lending its support to a broad international conference on Indochina, even though recent indications have suggested that Moscow was actively considering the French proposal for such a conference. We are inclined to think the Soviets will remain circumspect and cautious in their direct role in Southeast Asia, and will avoid any dramatic escalation of material support to North Vietnam. As has been the case thus far, the Soviets are likely to continue taking their cues from Hanoi, as long as the North Vietnamese leadership maintains a balanced posture in dealing with Moscow and Peking. For this reason, the USSR is not likely to seek formal international condemnation of the US action, whether in the UN or elsewhere, since Hanoi would not welcome international scrutiny of its own actions. Both Hanoi and Moscow, moreover, are likely to take into account the awkwardness of building a formal case against the US if American and South Vietnamese forces in Cambodia are locked in combat with North Vietnamese troops, whose presence there has not so far been acknowledged by the USSR.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

Should Moscow feel obliged to respond by a dramatic gesture, it may consider breaking off the SALT talks, although we consider this possibility highly unlikely. If such action does occur within the next few days, its likelihood would thereafter diminish even further.

The Soviets are more likely to be especially alert to the degree to which the neutralists react negatively to the US action. Moscow would like to be able if Hanoi were willing, to organize and amplify this negative response, and perhaps to encourage the neutralists to organize an effort on behalf of "neutralizing" Southeast Asia in an anti-US context (the Soviets would be sure to be intrigued by the implicit if unstated, anti-Chinese context of such a move). Also with a view to neutralizing the role of China, the USSR may also give more effusive verbal support to Sihanouk and the recent "Conference of the Peoples of Indochina" -- providing, of course, that the present Cambodian regime acquiesces in the US action and does not strike a neutralist posture. Finally, Moscow is likely to take some satisfaction in the thought that the US action further darkens for the time being any prospect for improved US-Chinese Communist relations.

INR/USSR and Eastern Europe
Director: IMTobin
Analyst : IBelousovitch
Ext : 22233

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED